

The Same Dance

by Separatist Supporter

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Summary: In the wake of an experiment with Forerunner technology, the SPARTANs of Blue Team find themselves on an unknown ship, soon to come under threat by a foe as enigmatic, and as ruthless, as the Covenant. They know the price of failure; once more shall a few men and women dance with death-to lay their lives on the line for people they do not, and never will, know.

The Same Dance

Disclaimer: Halo is owned by 343i, Vandread by Funimation.

****A/N:**** If this were humor based, I'd have titled it The Macguffin Did It.

****A/N#2:**** Vandread's a damn good show. Asides from a few facial animations that fell straight into the uncanny valley (and for only doing two seasons) I can't really offer any major criticisms of it. Watch itâ€”_NOWâ€”_if you haven't.

Word Count: 1,497

* * *

><p>1258 HOURS, FEBRUARY 8, 2553 (MILITARY CALENDAR) Forerunner Micro Dyson Sphere, Onyx

The crystal was intriguing, to say the least.

Since the group had found the facility several weeks ago, Dr. Halsey had set about trying to unravel the Forerunners' secrets. She felt she had made remarkable headway, especially considering that she was working alone on the technology of a race whose advances made quantum mechanics look like primary school addition. Catherine Halsey had much of the UNSC's understanding of both the Covenant and the long-gone race they revered so at her disposal, stored either in her laptop or in her own mind. And now that I've been exposed to fully

operational systems, she thought, "I can see just how little anyone actually understands."

The SPARTANs and their seemingly subconscious understanding of the ancient devices (their success rate was far too high to be attributed to simple coincidence) had ironically been more useful at the start than her own knowledge. However, once they had gotten past the broad generalities, she has set to work and released the supersoldiers to their other duties.

With every stimulus she subjected it to, it reacted. It generated enough energy to power a Paris-class heavy frigate yet gave off almost no waste heat. Though she had not had much chance for analysis at the time, it reminded her of the crystal from under Menachite Mountain on Reach. The easiest solution to arrive at was that the Forerunners' mastery of seemingly everything could tell Humanity's grasp of reality to 'Fuck off,' as Mendez had so eloquently summarized.

Halsey glanced over at Mendez, who had drawn guard duty for the current rotation. Given that said task was little more than a formality, she was not surprised to see him leaning against the wall reading from his personal datapad. They had not spoken to each other much—he likely thought she was still upset over being left in the dark about the SPARTAN-III Project and he was not happy about her apparent disapproval of the IIIs. In truth, she had gotten over her anger and only remained aloof from the young commandos because she pitied them—and if there was one thing she knew SPARTANs universally despised, it was being pitied. It was also possible that he was still coming to grips with just what Kurt had done in his efforts to keep Gamma Company alive, and how it might well have doomed the remaining three members of Team Saber.

Returning her attention to the strange crystal, she continued to experiment. It had become a reprieve of sorts, a distraction to indulge in when the frustration of being unable to open the Slipspace pods became too much. Once she had carried out the current set of tests and analyzed the results—the mental exercises for that being quite cathartic—she would resume her work on the pods.

"Jerrod," she said to the AI, "begin applying parameter set thirty-two."

* * *

><p>Olivia-G133 was silent, like she always was, as she made her way back to the structure their group had set up camp in and around. Roughly a meter and a half behind her was Mark-G327, his footsteps also quiet if not to the degree or consistency of her own. In between the two and tied to a sapling they had cut was the recently killed carcass of one of the deer-like creatures that roamed about the artificial world.<p>

The animals did not seem to know what to make of the humans. That lack of fear, coupled with the capabilities of being a SPARTAN and body armor that was both vacuum sealed and capable of optical camouflage, had made hunting them almost insultingly easy. If their supplies had not been so low, she would have dispensed with the armor and gone out with just a combat knife for hunting and an M6D to ward off any of the predators that were no doubt part of the food

chain.

The two young soldiers crested the hill they were traversing and came into sight of their base camp. The structure they had settled around was massive—a central eight-hundred meter across octagon that rose sharply for almost three hundred meters before becoming a plateau six-hundred meters across. Encompassing the main building were eight smaller structures; the Doctor believed them all to be a single unit, the connections merely buried under the soil by millennia of erosion. Four squat sections each with a single spire that was completely vertical on the interior side, but angled sharply on the side facing away from the central structure; the other four towered over the rest and angled towards the center like the manipulators on some models of maintenance drones. Halsey believed it was some kind of emergency power node.

Compared to the Forerunner architecture, the SPARTANs' camp was miniscule—a stone slab for skinning that the IIs had dragged up, a rack for tanning those skins (no one knew where Mendez had learned that), and a fire for roasting the meat. Everyone slept in the structure. When active they would break into pairs and go about keeping their little enclave operational, with one pair remaining behind to guard the site.

They had not even started downhill when a blue-white flash shone from the structure's entrance and a trio of amber lights—an emergency recall—flashed across her HUD. The two instantly tossed the carcass down, drew their carbines, and broke into a run. As they neared, Olivia could make out Tom-B292 and Lucy-B091—the current watch—close in from wherever they had been on lookout.

An instant later, the blue-white glow was back—and expanding. Olivia could only watch in dismay as Tom attempted to shield his partner with his own body when the miasma flowed over them. The dismay morphed into horror as tendrils sprouted and started to move towards the rest of them. Before she could evade, one struck her.

Against all odds, it looked to be some kind of crystal. As it spread out and covered her body, she saw that the others had been similarly caught, despite their best efforts to dodge. Then the crystal covered her, and everything went black.

As quickly as it had begun, the crystal receded. Only an empty campsite remained to show that anyone had ever been there.

* * *

><p>A number of his coworkers at the factory had often told him that he had a habit of speaking first and thinking later. Not for the first time that day, Hibiki Tokai found himself agreeing with that assessment.<p>

Certainly, he had been close to making off with the Vanguard—probably would have too, if the Ikazuchi had not launched early—but he had also come within a hairsbreadth of execution. However, as he willed himself to go faster to escape the Woman chasing him, such concerns were now academic. There were more pressing matters, such as how the ship was seemingly coming apart around him and that he had no way off.

He realized that he had somehow run in a massive circleâ€”from the reactor, through the corridors, and backâ€”which, if his memory of the ship was right, meant he could possibly get to the Vanguard hanger through the hole the Woman's fighter had made. If he could get there and if there was still a mech left and if there was a functional way out, he would _probably_ be fine.

_I really don't like those odds . . . _

Climbing the debris was easy, even with the large ovoid NAVI robot throwing off his balanceâ€”consistent physical labor had its perks. He thought he heard another one of the women behind him but did not stop to check; he was a big enough target as it stood, he did not plan on being a _stationary_ one. Soon enough, he was through the gap.

There were indeed several Vanguards present; he made for the nearest one, which had been knocked down by rubble. They were expected to withstand artillery strikesâ€”a few girders were nothing. As a further stroke of luck, the cockpit was open and clear. Getting in and sealing up was easy.

"Alright partner," he gasped, "we're getting out of this place."

Hibiki looked at the controls and felt the blood drain from his face. "How's this thing supposed to move?"

The NAVI robot made a static filled beep but offered no other response.

He struggled with the systems, but they remained stubbornly unresponsive. "Come on . . . move it!" he growled. Every second he delayed decreased his chances of escape.

As he attempted to brute force the Vanguard into motion, he felt a shudder run through the shipâ€”those had been happening since the attack had begun, but this one seemed different.

Then a bright blue glow filled the cockpit and he thought he saw something hovering in front of him; then he felt like he was falling. The sensation lasted for only a second before everything went black.

* * *

><p>Now then, I don't normally do this but . . . I'm going to allow some OC character submissions. Those who've read Ghosts of Onyx and paid close attention perhaps recall that there were eight Slip-space pods. Five of these are occupied by Fireteam Katana, the other three are unknown. It is these three that I'll be accepting OCs for as I've already created the Gamma S-IIIs, though you may still try to supplant those.

These characters can be either members of Beta Company fireteam X-ray or personnel from the Office of Naval Intelligence archeological site and/or its security detail.

Use this template:

Name:

Gender:

Age (as of 11/2552)/Date of Birth:

Height:

Appearance:

Home world:

Affiliation:

Rank:

Armor:

Primary Military Specialty:

Secondary Military Specialty:

Weapon(s) of Choice:

Personality:

*Additional Notes:

****Please note**** that the Date of Birth, Home world, and Additional notes are optional all around, surnames are optional for SPARTANs, but everything else must be followed unless the character is a civilian scientist, in which case feel free to disregard Rank through Weapon(s) of Choice.

Also: I reserve the right to kill OCs (mine included, I should add) as the situation dictates without informing the creator of said demise beforehand; if I like the character, I'll PM the reviewer to iron out any detailsâ€" ****do not**** _ PM me.

The chosen OCs will appear in the next chapter, which will probably be a long way off.

End
file.